

**ABSTRACT**

5 The present invention provides a sanitary napkin that is thin (less than 5mm in thickness), highly absorbent and has a lateral flexibility allowing for controlled deformation when in use, namely the assumption of a "W" pattern. This controlled deformation provides a good comfort potential and simultaneously reduces the likelihood of bunching due to compression forces exerted laterally against the napkin by the thighs of the wearer. In a specific example, the sanitary  
10 napkin is characterized by a pair of preferential bending zones extending along the longitudinal axis of the sanitary napkin and by a pair of longitudinal adhesive zones on the liquid-impervious barrier layer of the sanitary napkin, that register with the preferential bending zones. The longitudinal adhesive zones fasten the sanitary napkin to the undergarment at the areas at which the sanitary napkin is  
15 intended to fold when subjected to lateral compression. This feature allows the napkin to fold and adopt a desired three-dimensional deformation profile in a predictable manner when laterally compressed.

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